

LAOS

8 JUL 1971

C.I.A. Aides Reported Leading Commando Raids in North Laos

The Washington Star

VIENTIANE, Laos, July 7.—A secret operation involving commando raiders, some led by employees of the Central Intelligence Agency, is reported under way against the Communist-held Plaine des Jarnes in northern Laos.

According to well-informed sources, United States aircraft have been landing on the plain, and one C-123 transport was stranded with its American crew there for a night.

The informants said the commandos had penetrated as far as an airstrip in the east-central part of the plain called Lima 22.

United States and Laotian officials here have refused to comment on the reported operation.

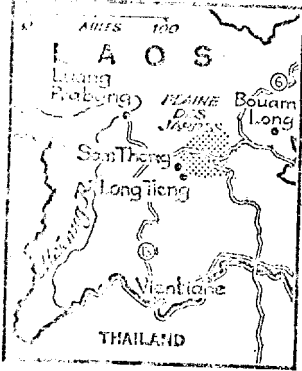
[In Washington, State Department officials said they were checking the situation and had no immediate comment.]

One American source said privately that the Meo leader, Gen. Vang Pao, whose C.I.A.-backed forces are based at Long Tieng, southwest of the plain, was "strengthening and improving his defensive position."

Some military sources suggested that the reported operation was being conducted by the Meo base of Bouam Long, north of the plain.

Informants said two Thai battalions and six Meo battalions were involved. The Pathet Lao radio said the operation was being conducted by three regiments of General Vang Pao's forces.

In 1969, a joint United States-Laotian operation took the plain from Communist



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troops briefly but this led to a large North Vietnamese counter-attack, which drove the Meos back and almost resulted in the fall of Long Tieng.

Cambodian Plan Said to End

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia, July 7 (UPI)—The United States has abandoned its secret program of training regular Cambodian troops on Laos, United States sources said today, but is continuing to train Cambodian guerrillas.

The sources said that the program, financed by the Central Intelligence Agency, ended last month when a 500-man Cambodian army battalion wound up a three-month training course in the Laotian panhandle.

6 JUL 1971

House Defeats M'Closkey Bid for Laos Data

BY THOMAS J. FOLEY
Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — The House Wednesday knocked down an attempt by Rep. Paul N. McCloskey Jr. (R-Calif.) to force the State Department to reveal details of secret U.S. operations in Laos.

Members voted 261 to 118 against McCloskey's resolution of inquiry that would have asked the State Department to furnish documents "compatible with the public interest" containing policy guidelines to U.S. ambassadors in Laos over the last seven and one-half years.

A short time later, McCloskey and Deputy Undersecretary of State William B. Macomber Jr., engaged in an exchange at a House freedom of information subcommittee hearing when the congressman sought to question Macomber on the same subject.

Televised Hearing

McCloskey's repeated questions at the televised hearing about Laotian bombing policies brought a reminder from Macomber that he had appeared before the subcommittee to testify on State Department classification procedures.

"I didn't come up here to engage in a political discussion with you," he told McCloskey.

When McCloskey rephrased the questions in terms of whether Congress had the right to know about U.S. policy in Laos, Macomber finally said sharply:

"I'm not an expert on Laos, Pete, and I must say, this is the kind of thing that makes it difficult to cooperate with the legislative branch of government. If you want to use television time to belabor the State Department on this, I suggest you wait until you get somebody up here who is prepared to testify on Laos."

'Out of Order'

Rep. Frank Horton (R-N.Y.) called McCloskey "out of order" for his questions. Subcommittee Chairman William Moorhead (D-Pa.) said William Sullivan, former U.S. ambassador to Laos, will testify later this month and suggested that McCloskey wait until then to ask his questions.

McCloskey, who plans to run against President Nixon in the 1972 GOP presidential primaries, has been seeking release of information on CIA and other government activities in Laos since he made an 11-day trip to Indochina last April.

His resolution of inquiry that the House turned down is a seldom used device designed to give the legislative branch a lever to obtain information from the executive branch. If approved by the House, the department would have had 15 days to reply.

Laos Bombing

McCloskey told the House the United States has been involved in the war in Laos for seven years. He said more bombs have been dropped there than on Germany in World War II.

Noting that the Senate has held a secret session on the Laotian war, McCloskey said it was "incredible" that the House should not also be informed.

Rep. Peter Frelinghuysen (R-N.J.) replied that it would be naive to think that 435 members of the House could have access to classified information and that none of it would be made public.

Meanwhile, in the Senate:

-- Sen. John Sherman Cooper (R-Ky.) introduced legislation that would require the executive branch to give appropriate congressional committees Central Intelligence Agency reports and analyses now available only to the Administration.

-- Sen. George S. McGovern (D-S.D.) proposed that the total amount spent each year by the CIA be made public.